



Directorate of
Intelligence

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Afghanistan Situation Report (U)

5 June 1984

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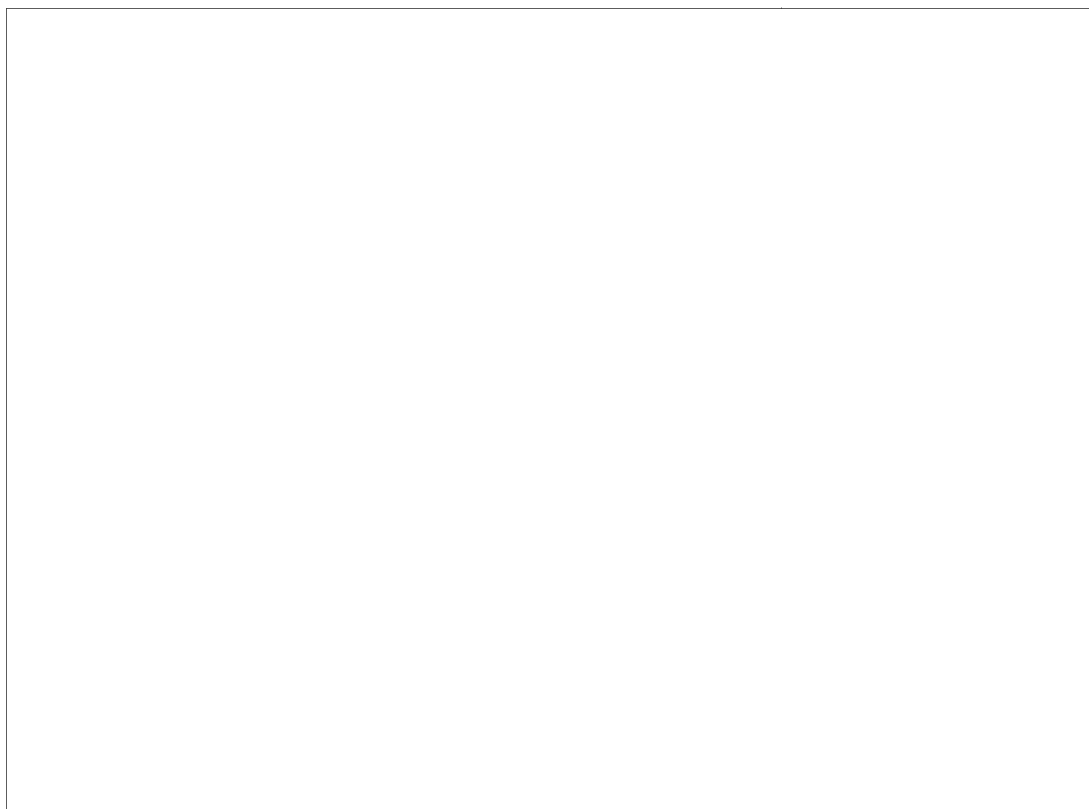
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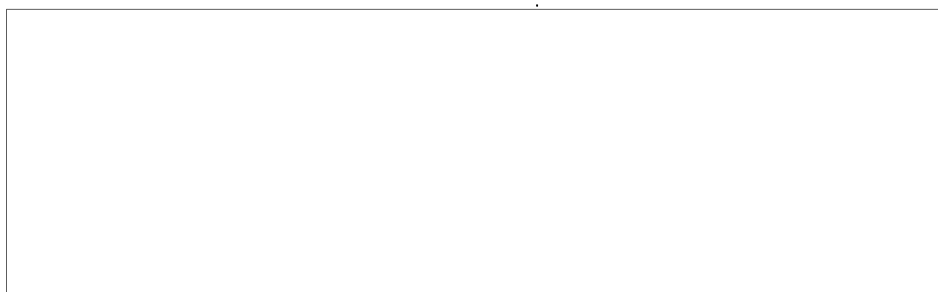


SOVIET DRUG USE IN AFGHANISTAN



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Comment:

Soviet officials probably regard the drug problem as one aspect of generally low morale, and they have been unwilling to

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[REDACTED]

provide the amenities necessary to keep troops from turning to drugs as a way of coping with difficult living conditions. The use of drugs is unlikely to have caused major combat problems but saps performance enough to cause growing concern. The Soviets have investigated military inefficiency and accidents that might have been caused by drugs. [REDACTED]

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COMMODITY SHORTAGES IN KABUL [REDACTED]

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Kabul is suffering serious shortages of fuel, sugar, and meat, according to US Embassy reports. Regime media have blamed the shortages on insurgents' "highway robbery" and interference with transportation. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] The media appealed to Kabul citizens to report hoarding and speculation and indicated that regime commissions to monitor prices have fined 66 shop owners for overcharging. [REDACTED]

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Comment:

Kabul media's concern is an unusual acknowledgment of the regime's lack of control over the countryside and is likely to elicit pro-resistance sentiment rather than censure. Because Soviet sweeps through the Panjsher Valley and nearby areas have failed to make the Termez-to-Kabul highway secure, and because bridges destroyed this spring by the insurgents have been replaced with military bridges of lower load capacity, the serious shortages are likely to continue. [REDACTED]

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AIRFIELD ATTACK (C)

According to press reports, Afghan insurgents claimed on 12 May that they destroyed a number of planes and helicopters at Bagram airbase with 16 ground-to-ground missiles, 15 mortar rounds, and 25 cannon shells. They said they fired their weapons from a distance of about 2.5 kilometers. According to satellite imagery, four MIG-21s and one fuel truck at Bagram were destroyed. [REDACTED]

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Comment:

The insurgents' "ground-to-ground missile" is likely to have been the 107 mm tube-launched rocket first made by the Chinese and widely used throughout the Third World since the 1960s. It has a range of about 8.5 kilometers and a warhead of some 8.4 kilograms of high explosive. Although the insurgents have used the RPG-7 rocket launcher frequently, its maximum effective range is only 300 meters and its warhead is much smaller than the 107 rocket. While not as light as the RPG, the 107 rocket is portable and would provide the insurgents with a significant capability to attack area targets such as airfields and garrisons at long, relatively safe ranges. []

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IN BRIEF

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-- Knowledgeable sources in Kabul are predicting that the extremely light winter snowfall will reduce hydroelectric power in the capital and hamper agriculture, according to US Embassy reports. []

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-- Multiple sources of the US Embassy report that security in Mazar-e Sharif has deteriorated markedly in recent weeks and that travel west of the city is especially hazardous. []

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PERSPECTIVE**THE SOVIETS AND MASOOD**

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The Soviets have failed to find Ahmad Shah Masood, the Afghan resistance's best known field commander, despite intensive efforts in the current Soviet offensive in the Panjsher Valley. Masood's successful attacks against Soviet forces and supply lines--even during a truce in the Panjsher--have made him a prime Soviet target. Nevertheless, his death or capture probably would be only a temporary reverse for the resistance. If Masood survives, his influence and prestige will be enhanced, and he will be in a better position to advance cooperation among insurgent groups in northeastern Afghanistan.

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The Offensive

The Soviets began their seventh offensive into the Panjsher Valley on 20 April 1984, ending a cease-fire that had lasted since January 1983.* We believe the Soviets decided to resume hostilities in response to more frequent attacks by Masood's guerrillas against Soviet and Afghan facilities and convoys outside the valley. Six previous Soviet campaigns failed to destroy the resistance in the Panjsher, and their current attempt--by far the most aggressive and ambitious--still appears to lack the timely, accurate intelligence and appropriate tactics necessary for them to achieve decisive results. So far, the Soviets have had little success locating and engaging insurgent groups.

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*See "Afghanistan: The Cease-Fire and the Future of the Insurgency in the Panjsher Valley," NESa 83-10211, September 1983, for a discussion of the strategic importance of the valley, the cease-fire, and previous operations.

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Masood's Operations

We estimate that Masood commands some 5,000 to 7,000 full-time and part-time insurgents in the Panjsher Valley area; other guerrilla groups provide his forces with occasional assistance. Masood has successfully used 30-man commando groups and 100- to 200-man autonomous expeditionary units outside the valley, which he used as a sanctuary during the truce.

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Masood's Strategy

We believe Masood's forces have been avoiding the main body of Soviet troops advancing up the Panjsher Valley.

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Insurgent Cooperation During the Campaign

According to US Embassy sources, cooperation among insurgents loyal to Peshawar groups is significantly better than during previous Soviet operations into the Panjsher Valley. Groups from as far away as Ghazni, as well as from the Shomali Plain and nearby areas, have provided assistance to the Panisher insurgents.

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Resistance Losses

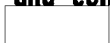
Despite the Afghan regime's public claims of victory in the Panjsher offensive, we believe the Soviets have made little progress in subduing the resistance. According to US Embassy reports, except for an incident in which Soviet helicopters killed some 200 insurgents in an open area outside the valley, guerrilla casualties have been low. High altitude bombing has not in our judgment, been effective against Masood's mobile groups. 

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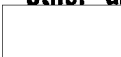
Outlook

Masood's death probably would be only a short-term blow to the resistance. Although his demise might lead to a succession struggle for control of insurgent forces in the Panjsher, a new leader likely would emerge--perhaps one of his own commanders. Alternatively, other eastern and northern area insurgent leaders, particularly Zabiullah Khan and others belonging to the Jamiat-i-Islami, could incorporate the Panjsher Valley group into their own organizations, continuing Masood's unification efforts. 

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If Masood survives the current offensive, the resistance probably will be strengthened. His prestige would be enhanced, improving his ability to unify area insurgent groups. Masood presumably will again try to improve his relations with other insurgent leaders in the northern, eastern, and central regions. Nevertheless, cooperation would proceed slowly. 

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Masood's insurgents probably will try to return to the Panjsher Valley after the operation concludes because of its strategic location and natural defenses. In our judgment, however, insurgent occupation of the valley is not essential to the resistance. Guerrillas could continue attacking convoys and other Soviet and Afghan targets from other areas, increasing security problems outside the Panjsher Valley. 

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The Soviets, aware of this, apparently have decided to leave some of their forces in the Panjsher Valley and move in Afghan units as well. Satellite photography taken in early May shows that the Soviets were improving their defensive positions around Rokhah, some 20 kilometers inside the valley and the site of a garrison before the 1983 truce. In order to secure the valley, the Soviets would have to commit a far larger force than their preparations suggest they apparently intend to leave in garrisons. Unless they increase their forces substantially, Soviet and Afghan garrisons also will probably come under attack.

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AHMAD SHAH MASOOD: A SYMBOL FOR THE RESISTANCE?

Masood has become one of the most prominent guerrilla leaders in Afghanistan, largely because of international press coverage of his successes against the Soviets. Although the Soviets may regard Masood as a symbol of the resistance, we believe some guerrilla commanders in other regions of Afghanistan actually command more men and are as effective as the Panjsher Valley insurgent leader. []

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In our judgment, Masood's ability to organize the insurgents in the Panjsher Valley into military units under a single command and use them in coordinated operations has made a vital contribution to the expansion of the Panjsher resistance. He has overcome some of the political infighting between rival insurgent groups and has coordinated multigroup attacks successfully. Masood also has earned the support of most civilians in the Panjsher Valley. []

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Masood, who has studied the works of Che Guevara and Mao Zedong and apparently has a good understanding of guerrilla tactics, has organized his forces into three major types of units. Some men serve part-time in stationary defense units in their own villages. Others are full-time professional fighters who operate as mobile commando groups in operations inside the valley, and a third group participates in operations outside the valley. Compared to many Afghan insurgent groups, Masood's forces are well-equipped, led by experienced fighters, and well-trained in guerrilla tactics and the use of heavy weapons and small arms. His military organization also includes an intelligence network that provides him with valuable information on impending Soviet activity in the area. Masood oversees guerrilla warfare schools in the valley and sends his insurgents outside the area on training missions to other groups not under his direct command. []

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We believe Masood has a long-term commitment to the resistance. Moreover, his commanders, the most trusted of which are probably his brothers, probably will continue to fight should the Soviets succeed in killing him. The Panjsher Valley insurgency, however, is essentially a Tajik organization, and its expansion into a unified national resistance effort is improbable. []

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An ethnic Tajik born in the Panjsher Valley in 1953, Masood was an engineering student at Kabul University in 1973 when the King was overthrown. He later fled to Pakistan, where he joined other Afghan dissidents in opposing the Daoud regime and its Communist successors. Along with other Panjsher students, Masood returned to the valley after the Soviet intervention in 1979 and won the support of the local population and insurgents from the fundamentalist Hizbi Islami organization. He maintains a loose alliance with the Jamiat-i-Islami organization. []

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